

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A production system including a production line being a series of a plurality of pieces of production equipment each of which has a parts supply unit, the production system comprising:

an NC management apparatus that is connected with each piece of the production equipment via a local-area network and acquires and stores therefrom NC data used for operating each piece of the production equipment; and

a scheduling apparatus that generates a production schedule from inputted production design data and transmits a generated production schedule to the NC management apparatus via the local-area network, wherein

the NC management apparatus generates, for each piece of the production equipment, NC data including production parameters for each piece of production equipment that is required to perform production according to the production schedule, and obtains, for each piece of the production equipment, differences between stored NC data that had been most recently stored prior to the generated NC data and [[the]] generated NC data from the production schedule, and outputs the obtained differences.

2. (Currently Amended) A production system including a production line being a series of a plurality of pieces of production equipment each of which has a parts supply unit, the production system comprising:

a LAN port that conducts on-line communications with a scheduling apparatus and each piece of the production equipment via a local-area network;

a memory unit for storing NC data of prior production schedules including production parameters for each piece of production equipment;

a production schedule acquiring means for acquiring a production schedule, for operating the pieces of production equipment to provide an output of production items from the production line, from the scheduling apparatus;

an NC data acquiring means for acquiring NC data used for operating each piece of the production equipment from the acquired production schedule; and

a difference obtaining means for obtaining, in terms of each production parameter for each piece of the production equipment, differences between ~~[[the]]~~ an acquired production schedule of NC data and stored NC data of the same type of items.

3. (Previously Presented) The production system of Claim 2, wherein

the production schedule is generated for each version of each production item, each production schedule showing a version of a production item,

the NC data acquiring means acquires NC data of a version of a production item to be made, and

the difference obtaining means obtains differences between the production schedule of NC data and stored NC data, in terms of each production parameter of a version of the same type of items of the stored NC data.

4. (Original) The production system of Claim 3 including a plurality of production lines each of which is used to mount parts onto a circuit board, and

each production parameter includes a production line ID, a production equipment ID, an effective date, a parts number ID, and an update date.

5. (Original) The production system of Claim 4 further comprising a display means that displays the differences obtained by the difference obtaining means.

6. (Previously Presented) The production system of Claim 5, wherein the generated NC data contains an NC program showing a parts mounting position, a parts arrangement program, a board program, and a parts library showing conditions for mounting parts.

7.-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) An NC data management method for use in a production system including a production line being a series of a plurality of pieces of production equipment each of which has a parts supply unit and means for storing NC data of items previously produced on the production line including production parameters for each piece of production equipment, the NC data management method comprising:

a production schedule acquiring step for acquiring a production schedule, for operating the pieces of production equipment to provide an output of production items from the production line, from a scheduling apparatus;

an NC data acquiring step for acquiring NC data used for operating each piece of the production equipment from the acquired production schedule including production parameters for each piece of production equipment; and

a difference obtaining step for obtaining, in terms of each production parameter for each piece of the production equipment, differences between ~~[[the]]~~ an acquired production schedule of NC data and stored NC data of the same type of items.

11. (Previously Presented) The NC data management method of Claim 10, wherein
the production schedule is generated for each version of each production item,
each production schedule showing a version of a production item,
the NC data acquiring step acquires NC data of a version of a production item to
be made, and
the difference obtaining step obtains differences between the production schedule
of NC data and stored NC data, in terms of each production parameter of a version of the same
type of items of the stored NC data.

12. (Original) The NC data management method of Claim 11, wherein
the production line is used to mount parts onto a circuit board, and
each production parameter includes a production line ID, a production equipment
ID, an effective date, a parts number ID, and an update date.

13. (Original) The NC data management method of Claim 12 further comprising a
display step that displays the differences obtained by the difference obtaining step.

14. (Previously Presented) The NC data management method of Claim 13, wherein
the generated NC data contains an NC program showing a parts mounting
position, a parts arrangement program, a board program, and a parts library showing conditions
for mounting parts.

15.-22. (Cancelled)